

Do You Want to Live Long?

The Thing Is Easy, Says Dr. George L. Meylan, of Columbia. All One Needs to Do Is Refrain From Worrying and Be Moderate in All Things



DR. GEORGE L. MEYLAN, of Columbia, who says the problem of long life is easily solved

THE rules for achieving longevity are comparatively simple, according to Dr. George L. Meylan, director of the Columbia University gymnasium. The difficulty lies in following the rules. And then there is the question whether longevity is the best thing for the progress of the world, or, to get the problem more into focus, is it the best thing for the progress of the nation? Does longevity mean slowing up? In fact, a wide field of speculation is opened when one approaches the comparatively simple problem of longevity. Perhaps the best way to do is to

stripped and walked out onto the springboard. But he did not dive. "Jest thought I'd teeter a bit," he explained, as he went back to the shore and waded in from the rocks. Hezekiah swam around for a quarter of an hour and then dressed and went back to his boat.

"Jest Lazy"

Seven years ago next Easter Dr. Meylan dropped in to see Hezekiah about 11 o'clock in the morning. For the first time in the ninety-seven years of his life the old gentleman was not up and about. Dr. Meylan asked him if he was sick.

"No," said Hezekiah, "jest kind o' lazy."

Dr. Meylan examined him and found that the circulation had ceased in his extremities. He suffered no pain, however. Hezekiah himself was not aware that he was not functioning normally in every way. That afternoon he died. It was merely that the machinery stopped.

"It was the only perfect example I have ever seen," said Dr. Meylan, "of death from old age."

Hezekiah Lombard worked all his life as a young man, sometimes in the lumber forests, sometimes on the lumber tows going down to Portland—which was very hard work, indeed—sometimes on the farm. As he began to get older he dropped off the harder kinds of work, and by the time he was seventy was not doing much except farming. At ninety he did a little hoeing in the garden, chopped some firewood occasionally and picked up chips and carried in wood for the fire. By the time he was ninety-five picking up chips and watching the fire from a comfortable seat were his share of the household duties. During his last winter he merely watched the fire.

His life was the essence of moderation, save in one particular. He neither smoked nor used alcohol in any form.

Don't be too hasty. Hezekiah's brother, who lived to be ninety-three, smoked moderately and drank moderately all his life. Hezekiah's son, seventy years old, who built two log houses last summer with his own hands and unassisted, both drinks and smokes in moderation and always has done so.

Dr. Meylan says the testimony as to drinking and smoking is evenly balanced. The records do not show, and twenty-five years of attentive study of the problem of longevity has not developed that non-drinkers and non-smokers live longer than moderate drinkers and smokers. It is the men who use tobacco or alcohol to excess who shorten their lives. And the cause is not alcohol or tobacco, but lack of moderation.

Second example.

Charles W. Eliot, president emeritus of Harvard University, was born on March 20, 1834, within a couple of months of eighty-five years ago. A few weeks ago Dr. Meylan sat beside Dr. Eliot at a dinner in Boston. Dr. Eliot was in perfect health and full vigor. Dr. Meylan asked him to what he attributed his long and vigorous life. In its briefest form Dr. Eliot's answer was "moderation in everything."

And Dr. Meylan adds that any professor at Harvard who tried to duplicate President Eliot's working average would have killed himself in three years.

Third example.

There were two professors of mathematics working side by side in the same university. They were approximately the same age. One of them taught his subject, gave his class the marks they deserved, and if they failed to pass it was their fault. The other worried over every student who failed to come up to the standard. Neither of the professors

had any organic trouble. Both were apparently healthy men. The I-should-worry professor is alive, healthy and happy. His confrère, who worried, died at fifty-five.

Caesar, for Example

"It was a perfect example of worrying himself to death," said Dr. Meylan.

Worry is evidently a matter of temperament, but worry has so many different forms that it probably has more to do with shortening life than lack of moderation in other respects. The conscientious man worries about his work. The ambitious man worries about his prospects. The overworked man both worries and overworks. Ambition is a terrible handicap to the man who wants to live long.

Worry shows itself in innumerable ways. It makes the naturally fat man thin. It ruins the temper. It makes one nervous. It causes indigestion. There is nothing worry cannot do. And the only thing the doctor can do is to advise his patient not to worry. The doctor cannot exercise control. All he can do is to give advice, and it is up to the patient to do the rest. It is a matter of temperament and self-control. Also, it is somewhat a matter of faith. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. Does He?

With work it is another affair. For every man there is a positive limit to the amount of work he can do, says Dr. Meylan, and that amount can be determined with exactness. He says that with the wholehearted cooperation of the patient he can determine by observations over a period of from six weeks to three months just how much work any man can do without danger to his health.

The worst of it is that a man cannot develop the ability to work longer. Nature has set the limits with each of us, and if we want to preserve life and health we must

keep within those limits and not complain. If nature has said we can work only four hours a day, we must not be envious of the man to whom nature has given the strength to work seven hours. The thing for the four-hour-a-day man to do is to learn to concentrate, so as to squeeze as much accomplishment into his four hours as the other fellow can get in seven hours.

It can be done. Edward Everett Hale was a fine example. He was never a strong man. From boyhood he was what would be called sickly. Experiment convinced him that he was a four-hour man and he made the rule never to work after midday. But he concentrated during his four hours, and the result was that he accomplished far more than the average man and lived longer than the average man.

One asks, Does it make any difference whether the work is of the outdoor variety—farming or forestry—or mental effort? Dr. Meylan says no. A farmer is limited in the amount of work he can safely do just the same as the writer or analytical chemist.

Of course, there are things one can do better or with less effort than others, and by choosing the things one can do best and with the least effort one can accomplish more in the specified working hours. But these things are immutable, just as the number of the working hours is immutable. That is, if one is best suited to one line of effort one cannot by toil and study develop another quality or direction of effort into the dominant.

A Dark Outlook

In fact, it is extremely difficult, almost impossible, to be optimistic over the problem of longevity. There is something depressing about an investigation of it. It seems as though the first rule should be "don't be ambitious."

Dr. Meylan admits it. The nation



DR. ELIOT, president emeritus of Harvard, who attributes his long life to moderate living

that sets up longevity as its ideal, he says, is pretty sure to slow up in other directions. Progress means burning out. It means doing in five years what ordinary effort would accomplish in twenty years. If a nation is to adopt longevity as its greatest end, it must be content with the twenty year instead of the five year speed mark, or it must be content to adopt the ideas of others instead of forming its own. It must drop back into the position of the second or third rate plodder and be satisfied.

The other alternative is to select a few specially equipped leaders to burn themselves out and sacrifice themselves for the progress of the nation. But who is to make the selection and who is to repress the ambitions of those who are not

chosen? The problem is too difficult. It is paternalism gone mad.

And there remains the other difficulty that no one can develop faculties with which nature has not endowed him. The best one can do is to cultivate to their highest point the faculties one has. If this can be made the uniform practice of the nation, in time a race of high-powered specialists will be developed that over the whole population of a country will cover the entire field of human endeavor, and then there can be both longevity and progress.

H. G. Wells prognosticates a decent winter climate for New York (in common with the rest of the earth) half a million years hence. In the same length of time that formidable race of high-powered specialists may be cultivated. Let's go!

A New York Woman Who Received an Ovation in Italy

A GREAT many hundreds of stories have been written about persons who have risen to success or fame, despite the handicap of early poverty, but this is a story of a woman who has attained international distinction despite riches, and it has features quite as remarkable as any to be found in the narratives of those other celebrities.

Less than two years ago Mrs. Dula Rae Drake had no individual claim to distinction beyond that of being widely known in New York as the wife of John A. Drake, financier and business partner of the late John W. Gates; today she is one of the strongest non-political links in the friendship that binds the United States and Italy. Even while the Fiume controversy was at its height and certain of our political leaders were being holly condemned by the modern descendants of the Roman Empire, those same people were crowding the streets to pay homage to Mrs. Drake whom they welcomed as a personification of the true spirit of America and hailed as a savior. Thus Mrs. Drake, through her activities, which began with war work, has served and continues to serve the best interests of both nations.

Thought It a Time Killer

When Mrs. Drake, by telephoning a few of her friends from her apartments in the Vanderbilt Hotel, first undertook the formation of an organization that was to be known as the American Free Milk and Relief for Italy, the general opinion was that, like a good many others, she had decided to dabble in war relief work, partly because it was fashionable and partly because the restricted social activities due to the war left her with a lot of spare time to kill. But those who figured that way did so without knowing the real Dula Drake or the tireless energy of which she is possessed.

Yet if these people had stopped to think they might have seen right from the start that Mrs. Drake intended doing things. In the first place, it was fashionable at the time to aid France and Belgium. Mrs. Drake turned to Italy. Why? Because she had been doing some



MRS. JOHN ADAMS DRAKE, a New York woman, who became the idol of Italy

thinking for herself and because she took the trouble to get herself personally well informed as to the conditions there.

She knew, and she had the facts and figures as proof, that the conditions in the war devastated areas of Italy were quite as bad as those in France and Belgium. She had the figures about the coal shortage, the appalling milk shortage that was causing a horrible infant mortality, the influenza epidemic and the vast army of homeless orphans it produced. All these things she studied out and she got down to the fundamental causes of all this suffering

and consulted specialists as to the best methods of relief.

And all this while her surroundings, even some of her friends, were tempting her back to the life of ease and luxury. It was all very well for her heart to go out to Italy. Doubtless that poor, dear country needed help, too, but why not send a check for a few thousand to the Red Cross or somebody and let them do the worrying? That was some of the advice she got, but that was just the kind she refused to listen to.

With her social standing she had no trouble in getting the best names

in the country on her list of members, but when it came to doing the work she soon found that she had to attend to that pretty much all herself. But that was no discouragement.

Did the Work Herself

Having laid her groundwork, as it were, she turned one of her rooms at the Vanderbilt into an office, installed a private telephone wire and went to work. It wasn't long before the money began to roll in. But this money wasn't allowed to remain in the bank long. Just as soon as sufficient to make a shipment had been gathered it was invested in dry milk and other supplies, which were rushed to Italy. From the Italian government Mrs. Drake obtained a grant of free transportation by land and water for the goods, so that practically every cent that was collected was spent for supplies, which was a strong point in favor of the organization.

Not content with her activities among the adults, Mrs. Drake organized the Bambino League, a junior auxiliary, and so started hundreds of children to working in Italy, until the Bambino League grew to have 5,000 members.

Meanwhile, the Italian branch of the main organization had been organized, under the patronage of the Queen herself, and trained physicians and specialists carried on the work there under the supervision of Henry M. Roe, of New York, and Captain Piero V. Tozzi. While the war raged, and for a short time afterward, Mrs. Drake's organization supplemented the work of the American Red Cross in Italy; but when the American Red Cross withdrew the vast relief work still to be done fell upon the smaller organization; but Mrs. Drake kept right on, working twelve and sixteen hours a day, and finally, when things were going smoothly here, decided upon a personal tour of inspection, to see if more could not be done.

She went there, expecting to make quiet visits to the 230 institutions which are being supplied by her organization, but instead the ship that took her over was greeted by the highest government officials and her tour became a series of ovations,

such as Italy probably has never extended to any other American woman. In Rome, in Naples, everywhere she went, the people in the streets cheered as she passed in her motorcar, with military escort provided by the government, and the highest dignitaries gave dinners and receptions in her honor and decorated her with medals. Yet never for a moment did these demonstrations turn her head or distract her from her work.

There was Fiume. What difference did it make, from the humanitarian point of view, who was finally to get that much contested city? It was filled with children who were starving and must be saved. It wasn't an easy matter to get supplies into Fiume, but Mrs. Drake found a way, and they were sent, enough to last three months. And, later, although she had to travel in an automobile by night, she went to Fiume herself to see that the needy children actually got the supplies that had been sent.

Here again her entry was turned into a sort of triumphal march, for Gabriele d'Annunzio and his entire staff came out to greet her and that other New York woman, Mrs. W. B. Thompson, who had accompanied her on the journey. Then through lanes of cheering people d'Annunzio took the two women to the Governor's palace, where he had his headquarters, and there gave a banquet in their honor.

Twice during the dinner d'Annunzio was forced to go out upon a balcony and address the great crowds that had gathered. He spoke of America in terms of highest praise, and then he took Mrs. Drake and Mrs. Thompson out with him and the two were cheered as heartily as the poet himself. Then before they left the soldier-poet gave Mrs. Drake a manifesto to the American people written in English in his own hand and decorated her with the gold medal of Fiume.

Received by the Pope

And there were two other gold medals which Mrs. Drake brought home with her when she returned the other day, one bestowed by the Mayor of Rome and the other by the president of the Italian Red Cross, and so many other honors were heaped upon her that it would become tedious to list them all.

CITTA' DI FIUME
COMUNIZIONE

For Mrs. John Adams Drake

You were an enormous mass
made dull by power and riches
Behold you are transformed
into ardent and active spiritual
ity; you are become a
rare "of storm and passion"
ready for the fight,
erect in the face of a
future greater than your
whole past.

"O Liberty, let others be
spare of you; but I will
never despair!" is the cry
of your own lion-hearted poet.

Fiume, 26. X. 1919.

Gabriele d'Annunzio

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO'S message to New York sent through Mrs. Drake

Even the Pope recognized her valuable service to Italy and invited Mrs. Drake to the Vatican where during a half hour's conference he not only expressed his gratitude and gave Mrs. Drake an autographed photograph of himself, but offered the cooperation of the Catholic Church in carrying on the relief work.

But any one who goes to interview Mrs. Drake will find it mighty hard to get anything out of her about the honors that Italy bestowed upon her, for she will talk only about the needs of that country, which she says is greatly misunderstood.

When seen in her office where, ever since the day after her return, she has been working away as busily as ever. "The trouble is that she has nothing to work with. Every man and woman from the lowest to the highest is working with every ounce of strength to save Italy. They have a wonderful organization that covers the entire country and everybody works."

"I met a young Italian naval officer, who, judging from appearances, might have been interested only in a round of entertainments and flirtations. The next day I saw him again at one of our institutions for orphans. He was helping to prepare food for the older children. He told me he was devoting four

days a week to this sort of thing, which he called the after-the-war-fight to save the country. His case was typical of the feeling with which every one there is imbued.

"Italy is like a wounded soldier, weak from loss of blood," continued Mrs. Drake. "But don't make a mistake," she added quickly. "Italy is not begging for help. Her people are patient and long suffering and highly appreciative of anything that is done with love; but they ask for nothing. They are fighting on in the same spirit with which they fought the war. In her reconstruction work Italy is making a record second to none among the countries of Europe, and she is doing it practically unaided and against tremendous odds."

"No one is helping to rebuild Northern Italy, devastated by the Austrians; nobody is sending any money or raw materials over there for that purpose, yet the rebuilding is going on and has been almost since the day the armistice was signed. And how are they doing it? The poor peasants are going back to the wreckage that was once their home and are rebuilding houses out of the ruins, and they are doing the work splendidly and without complaint."

Asks Square Deal

"It is this unconquerable spirit which has caused me to become such a warm admirer of the entire nation, and I am sure that every American who would stop to learn the truth about Italy would feel the same way about it. Oh, if I could only make my own America see things as they really are I am sure Italy would get a square deal."

"Politics do not interest me. I only know what I saw, and I believe I know the heart of the Italian people, and it holds only love for America. Everywhere I went I found this to be true. In Fiume, when d'Annunzio made his speech in praise of America, the people cheered wildly for fully five minutes, and a great crowd, as you know, always expresses its true sentiments."

"There are strong blood ties between the two nations, and politics should not be allowed to cast a cloud over this natural friendship. Destitute as the nation is, without coal or food or medicines, Italy wants the love and respect of America more than any of these material things. She wants our sympathy and our appreciation of the vital part she played in the war. Poor Italy wrecked herself in helping to bring about the victory, and yet there are so few who will give this heroic nation her just dues as will even recognize her sacrifices."